Psychological predictors of engagement in music piracy

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Introduction

Designed to appease the desire to listen to music freely and conveniently, music streaming services such as Spotify are exceptionally popular nowadays. Yet, music piracy remains prevalent. Assuming a psychological perspective, the present study considers why people might choose to engage in music piracy (the practice of illegally sourcing music) when so many popular and varied legal services now exist.

Aim

The present study considered the relationship between music piracy and broader musical engagement practices.

RQ1: Beyond demographics, can psychological concepts (i.e., personality and identity) as well as music engagement (i.e., listening engagement and format use) explain piracy attitudes?

RQ2: Are the uses and gratifications associated with one’s preferred format related to piracy attitudes?

Method

Sample:
- N = 396 USA, UK, & Australian residents
  - 38.80% USA, 26.50% UK, 34.80% Australia
  - 71.00% female, 28.00% male, 1.00% ‘custom’
- Aged 16 – 71 years
  - M = 34.53, Md√ = 20, SD = 8.98

Online questionnaire – Materials:
- Age, gender, country of residence, University degree
- Music engagement questions: Average daily listening (hours) & Importance of music in life (1-7 rating)
- Brown & MacDonald’s (2014) Attitudes Towards Music Piracy (AMP-12) scale
- Langford’s (2003) short five-item personality measure
- Brown & Krause’s (2016) 49-item Format uses and gratifications measure
- Krause & North’s (2016) music-technology identity measure
- Indication of the format used most often to listen to music (6 formats)
  - Physical (i.e., CD, vinyl, cassette)
  - Digital files (i.e., mp3)
  - Free digital streaming
  - Paid digital streaming
  - Radio
  - Live music

Results

RQ1: The Generalized Linear Mixed Method analysis that considered whether psychological constructs and music engagement variables accounted for music piracy attitudes was statistically significant, F (15, 366) = 4.391, p < .001, n² = .050.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GLMM analysis (N = 382)</th>
<th>Higher AMP-12 Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>More likely to be male</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>University degree</td>
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<td>Average daily music listening (hours)</td>
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<td>Music Importance rating (1-7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
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<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>Negatively associated</td>
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<td>Extraversion</td>
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<td>Agreeableness</td>
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<td>Neuroticism</td>
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<td>Most often used format</td>
<td>Significant pairwise comparisons</td>
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RQ2: The generalized linear mixed method analysis that considered how the eight format uses and gratification dimensions related to piracy attitudes was statistically significant, F (8, 283) = 5.715, p < .001, n² = .079. The eight uses & gratifications dimensions are: usability and intention to use; discovery; functional utility; flexibility; connection; social norms; value for money; and playback diversity. In particular, the value for money dimension was positively associated with more favorable piracy attitudes, while the connection uses and gratification dimension (characterized by emotionally connecting with music) was negatively associated with favorable piracy attitudes.

Conclusion

The associations between positive piracy attitudes and being male and expressing low levels of conscientiousness replicate findings reported elsewhere (Brown & MacDonald, 2014). The preference for accessing music digitally was also associated with engagement in music piracy, suggesting that even the seemingly-infinite catalogues of on-demand music from legal streaming services are not enough to deter music piracy. Furthermore, with regard to uses and gratifications, results suggest that music piracy is driven by a perception that buying music is poor value for money, rather than a reluctance to pay altogether. From a policy perspective, future research could seek to establish what it is that drives perceptions of value for money in relation to music consumption practices.

References


Please visit:

For more information, or to participate in current research, please visit:
www.researchaboutlistening.com
www.stevencaldwellbrown.com